

Introduction

The children of Israel had just been given the bad news from Moses. Because of their unbelief, they would not be allowed to cross the Jordan into the promised land. Frustration rose up inside of them. Day by day, their anger boiled because of the divine verdict pronounced upon them. They would eventually die in the wilderness. They would not cross over. Deep dissatisfaction settled in. Certain individuals came to carnal conclusions about what, they supposed, was really going on with their leader Moses. Listen to how Ellen White describes it.

“They were unwilling to submit to the terrible sentence that they must all die in the wilderness, and hence they were ready to seize upon every pretext for believing that it was not God but Moses who was leading them and who had pronounced their doom.” – **PP396**

It's hard for human beings to accept God's estimation of their heart; His assessment of their true condition. But to disallow Him to do this is to ultimately reject the truth.

Korah, eventually emerging as the leader in a conspiracy to overthrow Moses, was secretly spreading suspicion, doubting the deserved decision of doom. Reality of the divine rebuke was not allowed to sink in. Korah insisted that the spiritual condition of the people of God was

much better than Moses had said. In fact, he spoke very highly of the people.

Numbers 16:3 – “...all the congregation are holy, every one of them...”

But if they were holy, as Korah estimated, why were they denied access to the Promised Land? If they were holy, why would they spend another forty years wandering, and eventually dying in the wilderness? The fact was, according to God’s Word, they were evil.

Numbers 14:35 – “...this evil congregation...”

God shined the light of truth through His humble prophet Moses. The people and their disaffected leaders thought otherwise. God said “*evil*.” They said “*holy*.”

What happened with Korah is nothing new. Korah was not the pioneer of presumption. No doubt, the fruit of rebellion had ripened by Numbers chapter sixteen. But the seeds of insubordination had already sprouted by the end of Numbers chapter fourteen. Notice carefully how these seeds were planted.

Numbers 14:26 – “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, **27** How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I

have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. **28** Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: **29** Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, **30** Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning* which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. **31** But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. **32** But *as for* you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. **33** And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. **34** After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. **35** I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die...**39** And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly. **40** And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we *be here*, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. **41** And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. **42** Go not up, for the LORD *is* not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. **43** For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. **44** But they presumed to go up

unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. **45** Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, *even* unto Hormah.”

What did the children of Israel do? The very day after God had said that the twenty years olds and above would not be going into Canaan, but would wander for forty more years, eventually dying in the wilderness, they rebelled again, turned right around, and against Moses’ warning, tried to go in.

Despite the Prophet’s final warning that they were in transgression of God’s commandment, despite the fact that they would not prosper, (don’t miss this next point) despite the fact that the Lord was not among them, they still rushed blindly into battle only to be slaughtered by the Amalekites and the Canaanites. Please pay close attention to the language. They “*presumed*” to go up. What does that mean? It means this. They would not accept the reality, the truth that they were “*turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.*”

The seeds of presumption in Numbers chapter fourteen produced ripe fruit in the life of Korah and his cohorts in Numbers chapter sixteen. They were still talking and acting like they were right with God, like they were “holy;” when in reality they were “evil.” That’s how strong this satanic, spiritualistic spell is. After witnessing

the slaughter of the faithless and disobedient, presumption lived on in their hearts.

Korah's spirit is alive and well in these last days. Sadly, the experience of the seventh church of *Revelation 3:14-21* resembles this story. Her name is Laodicea, her disease is lukewarmness. God's people are presuming upon Him again. The Lord graciously reveals our true condition. But we disagree with His estimation of our character. Jesus says, "*You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*" We, looking at ourselves in a different mirror, seeing a different reflection, a more positive perspective, claim to be "*rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.*"

Here's another frightening parallel. Just as the children of Israel rushed into battle **WITHOUT** the presence of God, so the Seventh-day Adventist Church is rushing toward the great final conflict, the close of probation, the mark of the beast, and the time of trouble, with Jesus standing on the **OUTSIDE** knocking.